

HAWKE'S BAY RESEARCH LODGE No 305 – HISTORICAL NOTES 75 YEARS (1933-2008)

**An Address given by VWBro Owen Brown, PGLec, PM,
At the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Meeting
1st September 2008**

As early as 1922 some enthusiastic members of Hawke's Bay freemasonry met in Napier with the object of providing ways of disseminating Masonic knowledge to the lodges in the province. In that year three lodges opened in the Gisborne area. Fifteen lodges were already operating from Wairoa to Woodville and two more would open in Hastings and Napier within two years.

However, it was not until ten years later that real progress was reported, for on 28 July 1932 a meeting was held in the Havelock North lodge rooms, presided over by RWBro Rev R D B Waugh, ProvGM. It was resolved to form a Research Lodge and to apply for a Charter. Encouraged by the response, a further meeting was held on 3 October when the foundation officers were elected with RWBro Waugh as Worshipful Master.

It was at this meeting that it was resolved to apply to Grand Lodge for a floating (or peripatetic) Charter thus enabling the Lodge to hold its meetings in Hastings or any other centre as approved by the Provincial Grand Master.

On Tuesday 1 August 1933, fifty-six of the sixty-three Foundation Members assembled at the temporary¹ lodge room in the HB Farmers' buildings, Hastings, for the ceremony of consecration and the installation of the first Master. According to the minutes the total attendance was three hundred and seventy, including the Grand Master and Officers of Grand Lodge. The Grand Master was the Governor-General of New Zealand, the Rt Hon Lord Bledisloe and he was invited by the newly installed Master to accept Honorary Life Membership of the lodge.

For the first two years the meetings had been irregular, but on 2 August 1935 it was resolved that the regular meetings of the Lodge be fixed as the first Monday in the months of August, November, February and May. These days have remained fixed since then.

Dues in those early years were ten shillings and sixpence and, surprisingly, in 1963, before the change to decimal currency, this amount had been unchanged for thirty years.

Membership has fluctuated over the years. The war years of the early 1940's took its toll on members, as with other lodges. But in November 1944 our records show that twenty-two members were admitted. Membership since then has been as follows: - 1945 - 46; 1958 - 71 (50 Year Jubilee); 1990 – 92; 1995 – 86; 2000 - 71; 2005 – 67 and this year, 2008 - 82.

When, in 1996, New Zealand was invited to join the four-year old Australian Masonic Research Council (AMRC), Hawke's Bay Research 305 was one of the first four New Zealand research lodges to sign up. Today, all ten New Zealand research lodges are members of the Australian and New Zealand Masonic Research Council (ANZMRC).

This lodge has been involved at a personal level since that time, as the first New Zealand representative, VWBro Guy Palliser, PGDC was a member of Hawke's Bay Research 305 (as well as the Research Lodge of Wellington No 194). When VWBro Palliser retired our secretary, VWBro

Colin Heyward, PGLec, was asked to take over as the New Zealand delegate and was elected onto the executive as Assistant Secretary in 2002, an office he still holds.

This year, 2008, he is to present a Kellerman Lecture at the ANZMRC Biennial Conference in Canberra. This follows three other Hawke's Bay Research members who have been invited to present this lecture in the past – VWBro Palliser (1998 and 2000), Bro Roel van Leeuwen (2004) and Bro Kerry Nicholls (2006).

As a member of ANZMRC, Hawke's Bay Research 305 has hosted visiting distinguished Masonic lecturers from Canada, Israel, USA, Scotland and England whilst on their Australasian Lecture Tour.

Although most of our members reside in the Ruahine and Eastland Districts of Hawke's Bay and Gisborne, some live in more distant parts and we have had members as far away as Auckland and Dunedin. Today some members reside in Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, Manawatu and Waikato.

RWBro Deputy Grand Master, Hawke's Bay Research Lodge No 305 is in good heart and we look forward to our Centenary – and beyond.

Note: 1 - The first meeting had to be held in the temporary lodge room because the Hastings lodge room had been destroyed in the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake and was not rebuilt at that stage.